

Martin's Muffed Game

BY GRACE DOWNEY TINKHAM

"BOY! Maybe Martin Bradley isn't fond of that new purple bug of his," remarked one of the group of baseball players gathered beneath the big elm at an end of the lot where they held their games. "He's in it every minute. Wonder if he ever tears himself away long enough to eat and sleep?"

"I'd say he didn't—judging from the ball he's been pitching lately!" sharply commented another. "Awful's no name for it!"

"Too bad Martin can't see what that car is doing to him," Ned, captain of the Twilligers, put in solemnly. "He doesn't seem to realize it's ruining his ball."

"If he weren't our star pitcher—and perfectly satisfied with himself—he would realize," stated Rusty. "But the combination is pretty hard to break."

"And our battle with the Cougars—that crack nine—on for next Monday," Jimmy, who with Ned and Trix lived with good Colonel Pepperpod on Twilliger Hill, said with a groan. "Chest Judd pitching! Oh, why doesn't Mart wake up and stop being so wild over that purple—" Jimmy himself stopped short, his blue gaze fastening to a car up the street which was cutting a showy circle within the four corners. It straightened out and shot toward them. With a flourish it dipped to the curb and came to a standstill. The lips of the onlookers tightened and failed to relax at the driver's friendly greeting.

"H'lo, fellows," Martin sang out. "Come take a look at my little bug. Made her myself. Isn't she the baby doll?" The players ambled close and gazed in silence, while the proud owner rushed on: "Get the finish on that hood—like a mirror! And then turn your orbs to my joyous kewpie in her purple coat—class, eh? And perhaps you think this engine can't go. Power's her middle name! And speed! You should have seen Dobbs Woodward and me out on the Orchard road last night—"

"My cousin Fred Allen lives out that way," meaningly interrupted Rusty. "You stopped at his place for water. It was nearing midnight."

Martin chuckled. "That was Dobbs and me," he nodded. "On our way home."

"Fifty minutes to run in. Must have lost some sleep. Thought you looked

kind of droopy," reasoned Jimmy.

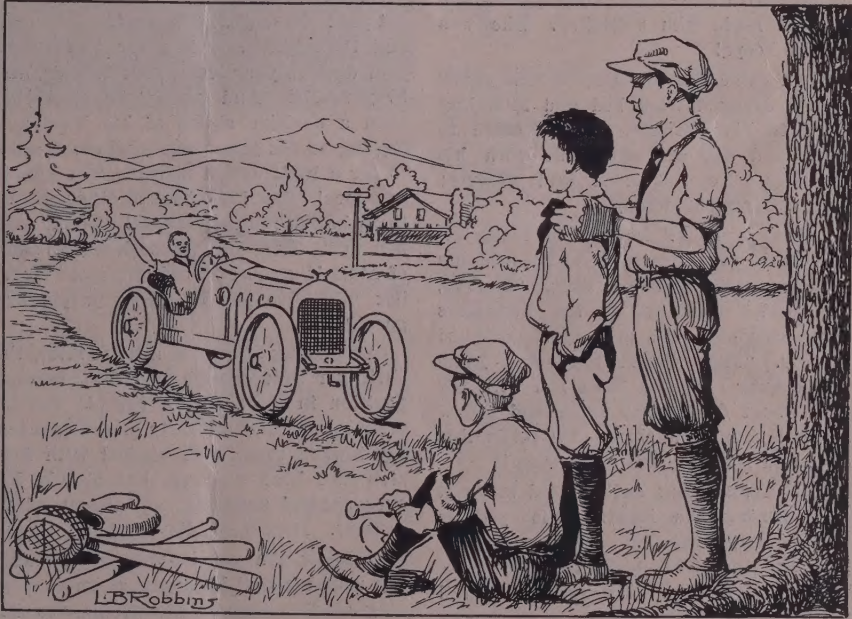
"Aw, what are you talking about!" Martin let out a disdainful laugh. "Never felt better in my life. But if I do lose a little sleep over this new car of mine, guess she's worth it!"

"Is she?" Ned stepped forward and held Martin with a level eye. "Is anything worth our game to the Cougars?"

or feel the old earth under their feet. They're the ones! And I could name a dozen. Stubby Ross. You know him. He needs that outing and needs it badly."

"Of course," agreed Martin, sweeping the others with an amused glance, "but why all the fussing? We meet the Cougars, Monday, in the deciding game. I pitch. And they get the big drubbing of their lives. Simple enough, isn't it?"

"Sounds so," gravely assented Trix. "But you see, Martin, the rest of us



"H'LO, FELLOWS," MARTIN SANG OUT. "COME TAKE A LOOK AT MY LITTLE BUG."

Drawing by L. B. Robbins

"Well, we haven't lost yet, have we?" protested Martin. "Why holler until we're hurt?"

Ned, determined to drive home his point, disregarded him and pressed on.

"Are all the purple cars in the world worth the loss of the Pepperpod cup and the use of that fine camp at Trout Lake, promised by Mr. Andrews to the winning team free of charge?" he wanted to know.

"And, say," thrust in direct little Jimmy, "perhaps that camp doesn't sound so much to you, Martin, with your car to get out to the country whenever you like; but don't forget the chaps not so lucky; the fellows who never get a peek at the woods, never have the chance to cast a line, bait a trap, saddle a horse,

haven't your confidence, for we've found out for ourselves that a fellow can't play a good game of one sort, while he has his heart and mind all wrapped up in another."

Again Martin gave a laugh. This time he swaggered back at them:

"Well, my mind is no one-track affair, I'll let you know. Just because I'm enjoying my little runabout, is no evidence that I'm neglecting my game."

"Neglecting it—no! Wiping it out, is all!" flashed from Jimmy. "The last three matches you pitched proved that. We won by the skin of our teeth—from little scrub teams. Neglecting it? No, just bungling it. Muffing to a finish!"

Martin's face went white, then red. He leaned swiftly forward, threw into gear,

jabbed on the gas, pulled from the curb and sped down the street. The group stared after him.

"You got him that time, Jimmy," approved one. "Mart can't stand to be called a bungler. It gives his vanity such an awful twist."

"Even if he is offended, if it snaps him up and brings him to himself, it'll be a blessing." Ned's voice had a wistful sound. "Anything to break the hold of that car and give him back to his game! Oh, I hope he sees in time to get in shape. We can't lose with Mart in right pitching form! But if he isn't—well, it'll be mighty hard to add a cup to our collection this year, and send poor little Stubby out of town for the summer,—mighty hard, I'm afraid!"

The days passed, and Martin continued his pleasant way. Soon the talk with his team mates was forgotten, lost in the joy of the little car. What a machine she was! How she responded! And a beauty! Had he ever possessed anything that gave him so much happiness! Would he part with her—ever? Not much! The thought made him wretched. She was his for keeps!

Then came the morning of the game. Martin dragged from bed and languidly got into his clothing, pausing often to yawn and dig at heavy lids with his knuckles. He felt cross and gloomy; everything went wrong.

"Bungler, am I?" he growled to his reflection in the mirror as he brushed his dark hair with wicked strokes. "Muffling, eh? And I've pitched on the Twilligers three seasons." His grey eyes narrowed fiercely. "They forget that—and jump me because I want a little fun with my car. Can't do that so much and pitch! H'mph! I'll show them. I'll settle this once and for all! I'll show them!"

Martin did. But sadly. Ned knew it was coming the instant his pitcher stepped upon the lot. Fatigue showed in every line of his body, in every move he made; his eyes were heavy and dull and he frequently stifled large yawns with the back of his none too steady hands.

"Done for!" wailed Ned. "We're done for!"

But how they fought! How the Twilligers struggled and schemed and tried! In the third inning they lifted Martin and put in Trix, who battled like a true soldier, but was no match for the clever Chest Judd of the Cougars. Later Trix gave place to Rusty, and Rusty to Nash Taylor, a new man on the team. Every fair device of the game they knew, they made use of. But failed. The score closed 8 to 1. The valiant Twilligers were beaten.

A dismal nine they trailed from the diamond and made their ways homeward, not a smile, not a word, all were silent and grim. Martin clambered into his purple bug and drove off—alone. None appeared to notice him.

Days followed in which they still did not notice him. He began to think of the old happy days of comradeship he had known with them, when they'd call him on the telephone, hail him jovially on the street, or drop in at his home for a friendly chat. All that was no more. They seemed unaware of his existence. He was an outcast. And he knew it.

"Oh, I muffed that game all right," he cried out to himself, shunned and lonely, one evening on the steps of his back porch. "It was my fault that we didn't win. I wasn't in trim, no sleep and my mind only on my car. But I figured I could do it anyway." He broke off and his head went down in his hands. "If it was only the cup lost, it wouldn't be so tough," he said miserably. "But the camp—Stubby and the others. Lame Stubby with his face like chalk. Why—why didn't I remember him? What was wrong with me?" He drew in a deep breath and stiffened. "Here is your answer to that," he told himself savagely. "You were weak—you let the purple bug get you! Rule you! She made you selfish and thoughtless. She made you forget your duty to your team, your friends, and to yourself! And now," he completed with a decisive shake of his head and tensing of his jaw, "here's where I come in for a little action myself. The purple bug goes! She'll not have another chance to make me muff my game! I—I'll give her up." Here his voice shook in spite of himself, and he forced out, more steadily: "I'll give her up. The purple bug goes!"

One stifling afternoon a week later, the Twilliger nine roused from its reclining position in the shade of the big elm on their lot, to stare intently at a boy crossing toward them. He walked with firm step and head well up, but plainly his eyes showed suffering he attempted to conceal. Martin Bradley!

"I know I'm not in very good standing round here," he began at once, stopping at the edge of the group, "so I'll say my say as quickly as possible and be done with it. It's about a camp at Trout Lake. One has been obtained for the Twilligers and their friends, about three miles down the beach from the one won by the Cougars. But at this point the fishing is especially fine, there's a float for diving, a couple of boats, three saddle horses, all kinds of trails back into the woods, and camp equipment for a regiment. It's great! And it's ready for you. Everything's set. Go to it and escape this blistering heat; have the time of your lives!"

"But wait! Martin!" Ned was instantly on his feet. Martin had turned away. "That's not all. We want to know who put through this deal—and who to thank for it."

"Aw, why worry?" threw back Martin, moving on. "The camp is there—hop to it. Forget the detail work."

Ned bounded after him. "You think we'd do that?" he demanded, taking Martin by the shoulder and halting him. "We want the whole story. Who do we thank?"

Martin flushed a little, but whipped a twisted grin to unsteady lips.

"Well, if you're bound and bent to thank," he said in a low tone, "guess you better thank the—purple bug."

"The purple bug!" cried the others.

"Sold her," said Martin. "Leased the camp for two seasons with the money." He stopped, gave a short laugh. "She was a great little car all right, and I—I thought a lot of her. But she was making me muff things." His chin thrust out and his lips grew stern. "I couldn't have that," he finished with firmness. "I couldn't let her—or anything else—ever again make me muff my game!"

How I Know

BY MAE NORTON MORRIS

I SAW a bee go buzzing by,
I heard a bluebird sing;
I touched a pussy-willow soft—
And now I know 'tis Spring!

The Chisel

A Toggles Story

BY FREDERICK HALL

NOW no one had ever told Toggles that he must not handle his grandpa's tools. Or—no, it was not quite that way either, it was like this: Toggles and mamma went down toward the big barn one morning and hearing a hammering stepped into the work shop and there was Grandpa, rivetting a new tooth into the mowing machine—that was their very first week at the farm. Toggles was deeply interested, he had not even known before that a mowing machine had teeth and some of the tools he never had seen before and he looked all about and asked many questions and at last mother said:

"Now you must remember not to handle Grandpa's tools."

But Grandpa spoke up and said:

"Well, now, as far as I am concerned, I would not put it as strong as that. Any tools that he uses he must of course put back, that is very important. But, as to touching them—well, there are some tools I would say better not be touched, there is that draw shave; but the hammers, a boy ten years old, ought to be able to use them. He'd pound his finger once in a while to be sure but every one who learns to use tools has to do that sometimes, at the beginning."

So you see it was not perfectly clear. Toggles must not touch the draw shave, but he might use the hammers, the little one and the big one, and the in-between-tools had not been settled. What he needed was something to give an edge to a strip of thin board that he was shaping and his pocket knife was too dull. He and Johnny, who lived on the next farm, had found a piece of soft stone the

day before and Johnny had said it was so soft that he believed a knife would cut it and he was right, only their trying had spoiled Toggles's knife edge. Grandpa had promised to sharpen it again, if Toggles would turn the grindstone, but Grandpa had not yet found time.

So Toggles took down the chisel and felt its edge, as he had seen Grandpa do, and found it good and sharp. Then he took in his left hand his strip of board and in his right hand he took the chisel, and, bit by bit, he worked off the edge and it was going finely when—and he never could tell just how it happened—the chisel slipped and in Toggles' forefinger, right at the first joint, there was a deep, red gash and the blood was dropping.

He put the chisel back and wound his handkerchief around the finger. Then he went up to the house, the finger bleeding more and more, and mother washed it and bound it up in some absorbent cotton and a little roll of bandage out of the first aid box, but that was not the end.

Everything he tried to do, somehow that sore finger got in the way. Toggles had had no idea he used his left hand so much or that one forefinger could make the difference it did. He could not drive Dobbin, when he and Grandpa were on the wagon, he could not use a rake or a pitchfork,—Grandpa let him use a pitchfork sometimes,—he could not carry a pail in that hand when he went down to feed the pigs, he could not pump with that hand, he had to pump one-handed—there was not an hour of the day that Toggles was not reminded of that chisel, and he wished it never had been made or that Grandpa never had bought it.

The finger kept growing better of course, but even at the end of the summer Toggles had an ugly scar there and Grandpa thinks he will have one always.

One day, when it had almost healed, Toggles went into the tool house where Grandpa was mending a piece of harness, and a shingle lying on the floor reminded him that here was something out of which to make a steamboat, one that would really go—if you made a paddle wheel for it and used a rubber band. He picked the shingle up and was whittling it into shape (Grandpa had sharpened the knife) when Grandpa said:

"Here, take the chisel. That will go a great deal better."

Toggles looked at him in blank amazement.

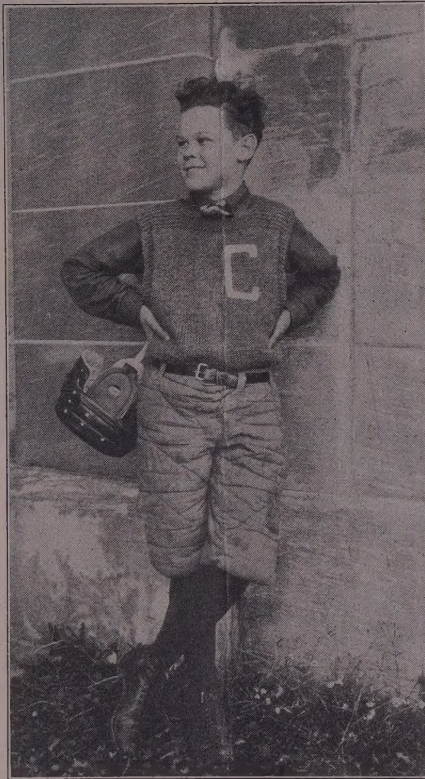
"I—I think I better not," he said.

"Why?" asked Grandpa.

"It's awful sharp. That's the same one I cut myself with."

"So is your knife sharp."

And Grandpa held out the chisel. Toggles took it as if it had been a big, lighted fire cracker, ready to go off at any moment, and then Grandpa showed him how it should be used: that the piece of wood he was cutting should be laid flat on the floor or on a work



Made with a Kodak

A Double Contract

BY MARIAN HURD MCNEELY

MY father says a gentleman will never tell a lie;
Nor pitch upon a smaller boy, nor make his mother cry;
Nor ever cheat in playing games, nor carry tales, nor sneak,
Nor use the words he wouldn't like to hear his mother speak.

My mother says a gentleman remembers teeth and hair,
And when a woman comes will think to offer her a chair.
He takes his hat off in the house and stands till ladies sit,
And when the cake is passed won't grab the largest piece of it.

I know that both of them are right, and yet it seems to me
If they would think alike, how much more easy things would be.
I'm trying hard to suit them both,—I do the best I can,—
But gee, I wish they'd think the same about a gentleman!

bench and never held in the hand; and, sure enough, the chisel did the work a great deal better and quicker than the knife could have done it.

"You see," explained Grandpa, when the steamboat was finished and together they walked toward the house, "it is not so much that things are too sharp, or too dull, or too strong, or too weak; and in the whole world there aren't many really bad things. People do harm with good things when they don't know how to use

them. Now I know boys I would not trust with a sling shot. They would break windows, and shoot at birds, they might even shoot at people; but you have had a sling shot all summer long, because you know how to use it. And now you know how to use the chisel and some day I will teach you to use the draw shave—I think you are big enough now. This will be a very happy world," mused Grandpa, "when people really learn how to use really good things so as to do good with them and not do harm: how to use newspapers, and books, and entertainments, and guns, and airships, and money. My, what a world it would be!"

And Toggles did not, of course, understand all Grandpa meant, but he could see that the world would have been much happier for him if he had had his chisel less on the very first time he used the chisel.

Undiscovered Friendship

BY ELLEN C. LLORAS

"OH, yes, Lois is a nice girl," conceded Nona a little petulantly; "but I can't be friends with everybody in the world."

"That's just what I'd like to see you be," insisted Cousin Ethel; "friendly with everybody just as far as your touch reaches."

"But my touch doesn't reach," countered Nona; "that's just what I'm trying to say. It takes every minute of my time as it is, and I don't see half as much of the girls as I'd like to either."

"How many girls?"

"Why—" Nona's face took on a slightly puzzled expression. "Why, Mabel, and Nora, and Lula, and—and—"

"That's almost the list, isn't it?" smiled Cousin Ethel. "And that's why you were so lost last summer when these girls left town a month before you did. Your days were empty because you had formed no other friendships, and had even discouraged any impulse to form more."

"No, I didn't do that; at least I didn't mean to. But there just isn't time enough to go to see everybody."

"That's true enough; but just a smile as you pass is a wonderful friendship maker. What I mean is, the minute as you meet is going to be either friendly or indifferent—and it's easy enough to make it friendly. You don't know what a wealth of undiscovered friendship will be yours if you just try it a while."

"Try—just how do you mean?"

"Just make each contact you have a friendly one. Your days are full. I know that. But friendliness is such a dear trait, it's worth cultivating; especially in the tiny ways that cost only a thought."

"And a thought would make me phone Lois, I suppose, about that book I know she needs in her English work," smiled Nona, as she took up the telephone receiver.



THE BEACON CLUB

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.



Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of The Beacon Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

642 WHEDEE STREET,
FORT COLLINS, COLO.

Dear Miss Buck:—We take *The Beacon* every Sunday. Mildred was very much interested in "The Mysterious Ileka". Eleanor lost track of it. We go to the Unitarian Sunday School of Fort Collins, Colo., and Eleanor's father is the superintendent. Professor Moral is our teacher and we are studying "Heroic Lives". Mildred lives next door to Eleanor. We have made an Enigma for *The Beacon*.

Yours sincerely,
MILDRED FRANK
and
ELEANOR FOOTE.

SUMMER STREET,
KINGSTON, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck:—I am enclosing a two-cent stamp for a new Beacon Club pin as I lost mine some time ago.

I am fourteen years of age and in the first year of High School. I already correspond with some *Beacon* members, and find it very interesting. I would like to have some other Club members who are about my age write to me.

Our superintendent, Miss Drew, went away to California to spend the winter, so we have a substitute to take her place.

Yours truly,
JEANNETTE PHINNEY.

96 MECHANIC STREET,
FITCHBURG, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck:—I am a boy eleven years old and go to the First Parish Church of Fitchburg. Rev. Howard A. Pease is our minister. I go to church and Sunday school every Sunday. I enjoy it very much. I would like to belong to the Beacon Club and wear a pin, also to correspond with some boy of my age.

Yours truly,
GERALD PAGE, JR.

Other new members of our Club are Doris E. Greenwood, Buffalo, N. Y.; Edith Phillips, North Kennebunkport, Me.; Louis MacDonald, Peterboro, N. H.

Do It Now

BY ELBRIDGE H. SABIN

IT was Saturday morning, and Katie was looking out through the sitting-room window. Mamma had asked her to do two little tasks. As she could not decide which to take up first, she had begun neither. Meanwhile, the minutes were slipping away.

Katie saw mamma trip down the back steps with a pan of milk for the cat's breakfast. Old Towser, dozing beneath an apple tree, saw too; but he did not get up. He knew it was kitty's right to drink first. He could have what was left.

Katie saw Tom, who had heard mamma's call, come trotting between the orchard trees. Proudly he came, with head held high and tail lashing from side to side; for in his mouth he held a tiny field mouse!

A few yards from the milk he stopped and carefully placed his prize upon the ground. So softly had it been carried that it was not hurt at all. Tom looked at his pan of milk; then at his captive. "Meou!" he said, patting the mouse with soft paws. Plainly he meant, "You stay here and behave yourself. I haven't decided yet which I want first, milk or meat."

The mouse crouched close to the ground. Not a move did he make; but his eyes sparkled brightly. Tom walked slowly towards his breakfast. As soon as he had taken a few steps, the mouse began also to walk slowly, towards a pile of boards.

In two jumps kitty reached him, and gave him a harder pat. "Meou!" he said again, this time more crossly. Mousie was not doing as he had been told and Tom did not like it. Three times this happened, and with each effort, the little animal drew nearer to the boards.

However, even now they were some distance off, and kitty was getting crosser and crosser.

"I bet next trip Tom eats him up," said Katie to herself.

But mousie was too wise. Perfectly still he lay, till kitty reached the pan and began to lap the milk. Then, with all his might, he began to run for the lumber pile. Tom heard him and ran after. So fast he went that he missed him with his paws and bumped against the boards. Mousie swung around, and, his enemy still chasing him, made for a clump of weeds. Into the grass he slipped and poor Tommy could not find him, though he searched a long time.

Now Towser, who had been looking on with mild interest, saw that the cat had left the milk. He thought his turn had come, so up he rose, and in a few gulps, cleaned the pan of every drop!

As he went away, back came kitty, mewing at every step. He had lost his meat, but anyway he had plenty of milk. That would do in a pinch. When he saw the empty pan, he gave a yowl of disgust, and sneaked into the barn. He must take his nap without any breakfast!

"Serves you right," called Katie. "You couldn't decide whether to take one or the other, and so you got neither."

"What are you going to do first, Katie?" called mamma. "Sweep the sitting room or make up your bed?"

"I don't know as it makes much difference," answered Katie, "but I'm going to do one or the other right straight off. If I don't, I won't ever get either done."

Who brings you another's secret will give your secret to someone else.—*Armenian Folk-Saying.*

RECREATION CORNER.

ENIGMA LIV

I am composed of 16 letters and am a place where Unitarians can sometimes be found.

My 14, 5, 2, is a kind of tree.

My 8, 13, 4, 6, is found on every farm.

My 12, 9, 1, 7, 15, are much used by travelers.

Those who have my 10, 6, 3, 16, 12, dislike to put it on.

"West Roxbury."

ENIGMA LV

I am composed of 12 letters and am the name of a State.

My 4 10, 7, is a part of the body.

My 6, 10, 11, 2, is usually found in the spring.

My 5, 8, 9, 12, 8, we have with wood fires.

My 1, 5, 7, is enjoyed by older people.

My 3, 2, 12, 7, one does not like to do.

MARTHA E. WEED.

NOVEL ACROSTIC

All words are of same length. When rightly guessed and placed one below another, the initials will spell one of my favorite books.

1. A Flower.
2. A place of business.
3. A country in North America.
4. A pad of paper.
5. A fruit.
6. A small animal.
7. A state in the United States.
8. A public speaker.
9. A device for climbing.
10. One of the red race.
11. Ability.
12. An inn.
13. Bigger.
14. To wipe out.

ROBERT EDDY.

RHYMED WORD SQUARE

My first is always part of glass
But should be found in you.

My second never is close by

My third can mean to specify;

My fourth is part of sketch or pull

But has to rhyme with *pevu*.

MARGARET JUDD BEACH.
(Age 11 years)

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 26

ENIGMA L.—I believe in work.

ENIGMA LL.—Dictionary.

JEWELLED DECAPITATIONS.—A-rid

M-ore

E-den

T-ear

H-ale

Y-awl

S-ham

T-ram

PRINTER'S PL.—He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both large and small;
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all.

A PUZZLING "SHOE".—1. Tongue. 2. Last. 3. Sole (soul). 4. Arch. 5. Heels (heels). 6. Tacks (tax). 7. Stitches. 8. Kid. 9. Eyelets. 10. Lining.

GIRLS' AND BOYS' NAMES.—Girls. 1. Elizabeth. 2. Jane. 3. Gertrude. 4. Mabel. 5. Isabel. 6. Elvira. Boys. 1. Winthrop. 2. Douglas. 3. William. 4. Albert. 5. Robert. 6. Benjamin.

THE BEACON

REV. FLORENCE BUCK, EDITOR.

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